

Household Hazardous Waste Disposal

Description

The average American house contains three to ten gallons of hazardous chemicals, including items such as automotive wastes, cleaners and paint. Proper buying, using, storing and disposal of hazardous materials will prevent these types of wastes from entering the environment, and will minimize exposure risks to humans.

This practice addresses the proper disposal of household hazardous wastes.

Wastes which are considered to be hazardous are waste materials that are any of the following:

IGNITABLE = burn readily or have a low flashpoint
REACTIVE = potential to explode or give off poisonous gases
CORROSIVE = corrode steel or alter skin tissue
TOXIC = harmful to human or aquatic life

For the proper disposal of quantities of hazardous waste over 1 gallon, contact the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Waste Management Division at 517-373-2730.

Pollutants Controlled and Impacts

The proper disposal of hazardous materials will minimize the amount of hazardous materials that will enter surface waters and contaminate groundwater supplies.

Application

Land Use

This BMP is applicable to all land use areas where household hazardous materials are present.

Soil/Topography/Climate

This BMP is applicable to all soil types, topography and climates.

When to Apply

This practice should be applied at all times.

Where to Apply

This should be applied in all households.

Specifications

General Considerations:

Improper disposal methods, such as pouring wastes into septic tanks or sewers, burying them in the back yard, may allow the hazardous waste to enter the ground or surface waters where they can

migrate to the water supplies we use for our drinking water. Some hazardous wastes which are discarded in landfills have leached out of the landfill and into the ground water. It is therefore important to dispose of hazardous wastes properly. Follow the guidelines below.

Buying, Storing and Using Household Hazardous Wastes:

1. Use alternative household products which are not toxic. See the attached Exhibit for some ideas.
2. Where alternative household products are not available, buy non-toxic products. Look for "non-toxic" on the label.
3. Always read labels carefully before buying and using hazardous products. Be aware of their uses and dangers. If directions are unclear, contact the manufacturer before using.
4. If your area is served by septic systems, make sure you buy products which are safe for septic systems. Most products include this type of information on the label.
5. Reduce your waste and save money by purchasing only the materials you need and will use.
6. Use the product according to the directions on the label, and in a well-ventilated area, where possible. Special care should be taken to avoid eye and skin contact, inhalation or ingestion of these materials. Many hazardous products have dangerous fumes that can burn your skin or irritate your eyes, so consider using gloves and protective eyewear.
7. Avoid mixing different products that can cause explosive or poisonous chemical reactions.
8. Keep unused portions in their original containers with labels intact and readable. Keep out of the reach of children and pets. Knowing the contents could be a lifesaver in case of accidental poisonings.
9. Store out of direct sunlight, in a cool, dry area.
10. Place all containers in a second container to contain any accidental spills.
11. Look up the phone number of the poison control center and place it near or on your phone in case of actual or suspected poisonings.

*You may also want to post the following numbers:

Center for Environmental Toxicology
(517) 353-6469

Center for Environmental Health Science
(517) 335-8350

MDNR Waste Management Division
(517) 373-2730

Disposing of Household Hazardous Wastes:

1. Identify materials needing special disposal consideration by key words on the label: POISON, CORROSIVE, CAUSTIC, VOLATILE, FLAMMABLE, EXPLOSIVE.

2. Whenever possible, reuse and recycle household hazardous wastes. For example:

*Used motor oil can be recycled.

*Paint thinners can be reused. (Let used solvents and paint thinners set for a while in a closed jar. The dirt and paints will settle to the bottom. The top portion can be reused. The amount of actual waste for disposal will be much less.)

*Offer surplus portions of products that are usable and safely packaged to others, such as pesticides to nurseries, and paint to theater groups.

Consult the attached Exhibit for information on disposing several other common household hazardous wastes.

3. Some hazardous materials that are no longer usable may need to be taken to a household hazardous waste collection center. A list of collection days and centers scheduled around the state is available from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Waste Management Division at (517)- 373-2730.

Getting the Community Involved:

Local communities can organize collection programs in their areas for household hazardous wastes. A public information and education program held prior to a collection day will help inform citizens of the hazards and risks associated with the products used in their homes. In a collection program, citizens bring their wastes to a common collection point. A licensed hazardous waste transporter sorts and packages the waste, and takes it to a hazardous waste facility that has been licensed to operate by the MDNR. Contact the MDNR Waste Management Division for information on starting a household hazardous waste collection day in your community.

Maintenance

Maintain the area in which the household hazardous wastes are stored by ensuring that product labels are legible, and that the products are being stored in a secondary container.

Exhibits

Exhibit 1: Does Your House 'Hold' Hazardous Waste? (brochure). Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Waste Management Division.

Exhibit 1

DOES YOUR HOUSE "HOLD" HAZARDOUS WASTE?

KEY:  poisonous  corrosive  flammable  reactive

PRODUCT

HAZARD

OPTIONS

key: see above

key:

- no alternative
- ★ alternative

AUTO

Antifreeze



- Take to a collection day or pour down drain to a sewage treatment plant. If you have a septic tank, don't pour more than 1 gallon per week down the drain. Greatly dilute the coolant.

Car Batteries



- Take to local service station or battery collection site for recycling.

Waste Motor Oil



- Take to local service station or oil collection site for recycling.

Gasoline/Kerosene



- Use uncontaminated gasoline or kerosene. Take contaminated fuel to a collection day.

CLEANERS

Floor Polish



- ★ Use those without petroleum distillates. Take to a collection day.

Furniture Polish



- ★ Lemon oil beeswax. Take to a collection day.

Drain Cleaner



- ★ Plunger, plumber's snake. Mix one cup each vinegar, baking soda, salt, pour into drain, let stand 15 minutes, flush with boiling water. Rinse them down drain with lots of water to a sewage treatment plant. If connected to a septic tank, give to someone who can use them or take to a collection day.

Oven Cleaner



- ★ Baking soda and salt — sprinkle on spills and wipe. Rinse them down drain with lots of water to a sewage treatment plant. If connected to a septic tank, give to someone who can use it or take to a collection day.

Exhibit 1

(con't.)

Toilet Bowl Cleaner



- ★ ½ cup chlorine bleach, let stand 30 minutes, brush and flush.
Flush down drain with lots of water. If connected to a septic tank and you have a large amount of cleaner to get rid of, take to a collection day.

Chlorine Bleach



Flush down drain with lots of water. Never mix with ammonia-containing products.

PAINT

Latex Paints



- Allow paints to solidify and dispose of in the trash.

Oil Base Paints



- ★ Use latex paints whenever possible. Take to household collection day.

Lead Base Paints



- ★ Use latex paints whenever possible. Take to collection day.

Paint Thinners/Turpentine
Mineral Spirits/Solvents



- ★ Sandpaper, sander.
Let sit in a closed jar and contaminants will settle to the bottom. Pour off liquid on top and reuse. Wrap paint sludge in newspaper, place inside a closed container in the trash. Take to a collection day.

PESTICIDES

Wood Preservatives



- ★ Use Wolmanized™ lumber rather than wood treated with pentachlorophenol. Take to a collection day.

Weed Killer



- ★ Pull weeds, keep grass short.
Take to a collection day.

Insecticides: Roach & Ant Killer



- ★ Boric Acid. Take to a collection day.